

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claim 1 has been amended to indicate that the T_g of the polyol used in the topcoat is from -100 to 25°C. The Amendment is supported at, for example page 11, lines 14-15 of the specification. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in Claim 7.

Claims 1-6 and 8-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 4,456,642 to Burgdorfer et al. (hereinafter "Burgdorfer"). The Examiner asserts that Burgdorfer states that "two component urethane coatings may be used" as a casing material for the disclosed gels, a skilled artisan knows to use a polyisocyanate and a polyol in the topcoat, and that the claimed polyol in the topcoat would have been obvious because of the breadth of the claimed T_g. Applicants note that Burgdorfer is the U.S. equivalent of EP-A 0 057 838 cited at page 2, line 7 and page 4, line 14 of the specification.

Applicants sought to provide a coating system that would have improved handling and haptic properties (gripping behavior on the surface) (see page 6, line 29 to page 7, line 2 of the Specification). In solving the problem, Applicants discovered the present coating system. The inventive coating system includes an anhydrous, gel-like, high molecular weight polyurethane composition, and a solvent-containing, solvent-free and/or aqueous polyurethane topcoat. The topcoat includes 0 to 50 wt.% of a polyurethane adduct, 0 to 90 wt.% of a flexible polyol having a T_g of -100 to 25°C and an OH content of 0 to 25 wt.%, and 1.7 to 60 wt.% of a polyisocyanate having an NCO content of 4 to 50 wt.%.

Burgdorfer discloses a gel pad including a gel encased in a flexible elastic casing. The gel includes a high molecular weight covalently cross-linked polyurethane matrix and a liquid dispersing agent. The casing materials can include polyurethane films, woven fabrics, knitted fabrics, and mesh fabrics.

Applicants indicate at page 5, lines 9-16, specific disadvantages with gel pads, such as those disclosed in Burgdorfer:

The disadvantage however is the surface of these gels, which is too rubbery and therefore sensitive to dirt, and does not have a good feel (is too tacky) and accordingly has unsatisfactory haptic properties. Either a film or textile material is therefore applied as protective layer. The films are also necessary in order to be able to handle the gel at all. Initially, this is expensive and also permits only a restricted use, or even no use at all of the gel in various applications where this film interferes (for example the central console in automobile interiors).

Applicants submit that the coating system of the present invention overcomes the problems associated with the gel pads disclosed in Burgdorfer.

The Examiner indicates that the bare disclosure in Burgdorfer, that a two component urethane coatings may be used as the casing material, renders the inventive coating system of amended Claim 1 obvious. Applicants respectfully disagree.

In order to modify a reference, the Examiner must provide some type of motivation in the cited prior art to modify the reference. In this case, Applicants sought to provide improved handling and haptic properties. Burgdorfer is completely silent regarding such properties, and, therefore, could not provide any direction, suggestion and/or motivation to a skilled artisan as to how such properties could be improved. As the Examiner has not provided any motivation or disclosure that would lead a skilled artisan from the bare two component urethane coating disclosure of Burgdorfer to the presently claimed coating system that provides improved handling and haptic properties, the Examiner has not provided a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

The Examiner further indicates that almost any polyol would meet the Tg limitation for the polyol in the topcoat. Applicants have amended Claim 1 to more particularly claim those polyols that are useful in the present invention.

Because Burgdorfer does not provide any motivation to reach the presently claimed invention and because the claimed polyols in the topcoat are not over broad, the claims are not obvious over Burgdorfer. Therefore, the rejection of Claims 1-6 and 8-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of Claims 1-11 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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